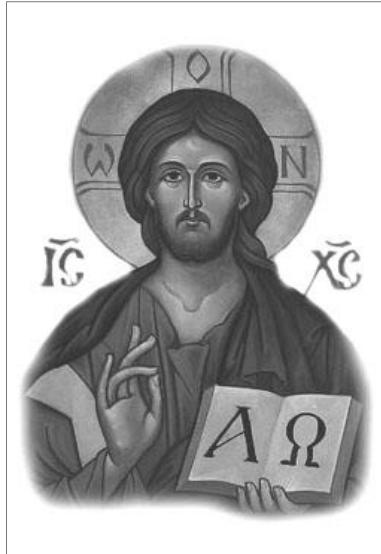


St Michael and All Angels, Sandhurst

ADVENT CELEBRATION



“Surely, I am coming soon!”

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

Revelation 22:20

ADVENT SUNDAY

3RD DECEMBER 2023

The Meaning of Advent

Tonight's service is a reflection on the meaning of Advent with particular reference to the longing of all of us for *peace*. The service uses the theme of light and darkness, representing good and evil, hope and despair. We begin in darkness, with the candle-light representing the hope of salvation which grows with the promise of the coming of Christ, spoken of by the readings, hymns and anthems.

The word Advent comes from the Latin meaning "coming" or arrival". It is a time of preparation for Christmas, when we celebrate Christ's first coming in the Incarnation. But Advent is also a time to think about and prepare for Christ's Second Coming as Judge.

The Bible presents Christ's second coming as the answer to the longing of God's people for deliverance from oppression, including the spiritual oppression of sin and the experience of injustice. The promise of deliverance, expressed throughout the Old and New Testaments, is focussed in the Messiah, the righteous king whom God would send to free his people from oppression and bring in the reign of universal peace.

Jesus proclaimed the Kingdom or rule of God through his preaching and miraculous works, making it clear that God's promises would indeed be fulfilled in him. But he understood that this required his own suffering, death and resurrection before the promise of God's Kingdom could be fully realised. And so the Church waits in hope for the fulfilment of the Kingdom, which will take place at his second coming – a day of reckoning for evil as well as reward for good. While the prospect of judgement is an awesome one, the promise that evil will finally be overcome fills us with hope and confidence to fight our own battles against evil, both in our own lives and in the wider world where wickedness and oppression still reign.

In the meantime, we are called both to wait in hope – a hope made tangible through the presence of the Holy Spirit within us – and to work to put the values of God's Kingdom into effect here and now. The season of Advent calls us to self-examination and action, to be at peace with God, with others and with ourselves, so that when Christ comes we may be ready to greet him.

"All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure." (1 John 3:3)

Rev John Castle, Rector

*The **Choir** begin the service by singing from the West End of the church the **Matin Responsory***

Words: medieval Roman rite; music: Palestrina (c.1525-1594)

I look from afar:

and lo, I see the power of God coming and a cloud covering the whole earth.

Go ye out to meet him and say:

Tell us, art thou he that should come to reign over thy people Israel?

High and low, rich and poor, one with another,

go ye out to meet him and say:

Hear, O thou Shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a sheep,

Tell us, art thou he that should come?

Stir up thy strength, O Lord and come to reign over thy people Israel.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost.

Processional Hymn 358: O come, O come Emmanuel

Bidding

It is time for us to wake out of sleep, for deliverance is nearer to us now than it was when first we believed. It is far on in the night; day is near. Let us therefore cast off the deeds of darkness and put on our armour as soldiers of the light.

The grace and peace of God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.
And also with you.

My brothers and sisters, we enter today the solemn season of Advent in which the Church bids us prepare to celebrate the coming of Christ; a coming that we recall in the Child of Bethlehem; a coming that we experience in the gift of his Spirit, in the bread of the eucharist, in the joy of human lives that are shared; a coming we wait for when God gathers up all things in Christ. Let us in this holy season reflect on the coming of Christ who brings light to the world. Let us leave behind the darkness of sin, walk in the light that shines on our path, and renew within ourselves the hope of glory to which he beckons us.

And as we turn towards the light, let us have on our hearts all those who see no light, for whom all is darkness and despair. Let us pray that they too may be illumined by Christ who is our light.

The first candle of the Advent ring is lit.

Silence

The Collect for Advent Sunday

Penitential Litany

The response to Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God,
is **have mercy on me, a sinner.**

Priest

May God, who loved the world so much
that he sent his Son to be our Saviour,
forgive us our sins and make us holy to serve him in the world,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Let us pray for the coming of God's kingdom
in the words our Saviour taught us.

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

1st Reading: Isaiah 9:2-7 *The dawn of peace*

Choir O Radiant Dawn

Words: liturgical antiphon; music: James MacMillan (b. 1959)

O Radiant Dawn, splendour of eternal Light, Sun of Justice,
Come, shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death.
Isaiah had prophesied,
“The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;
upon those who dwelt in the land of gloom a light has shone”.
O Radiant Dawn, splendour of eternal Light, Sun of Justice,
Come, shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death. Amen.

Hymn 519 Thy kingdom come, O God

2nd Reading Isaiah 11:1-9 *The Kingdom of Peace*

Choir A Tender shoot

Words: Es ist ein Ros' entsprungen (German, anon.), trans. William Bartholomew (1793-1867); music: Otto Goldschmidt (1829-1907)

A tender shoot has started up from a root of grace, as ancient seers imparted from Jesse's holy race: it blooms without a blight, blooms in the cold bleak winter, turning our darkness into light.	This shoot Isaiah taught us, from Jesse's root should spring; the Virgin Mary brought us the branch of which we sing; our God of endless might gave her this child to save us, thus turning darkness into light.
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Hymn 209 Hills of the North, Rejoice

3rd Reading: Luke 10:1-12 *The Messengers of Peace*

Choir Magnificat

Words: Luke 1:46-55; music: Joanna Forbes-L'Estrange (b. 1971)

My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour;
For he hath regarded the lowliness of his handmaiden.
For behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed
For he that is mighty hath magnified me, and holy is his Name.

And his mercy is on them that fear him throughout all generations.
He hath shewed strength with His arm: he hath scattered the proud in the
imagination of their hearts;
He hath put down the mighty from their seat and hath exalted the humble and
meek.
He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he hath sent empty away.
He remembering his mercy hath holpen his servant Israel,
As he promised to our forefathers, Abraham and his seed for ever.
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost,
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Hymn 226 I cannot tell why he whom angels worship

4th Reading: Revelation 21:22-22:7 *The eternal City of Peace*

Sermon: Rev John Castle (*Rector*)

Choir *E'en so Lord Jesus, Quickly Come*

Words: adapted from Revelation 22 by Ruth Manz; music: Paul Manz (1919-2009)

Peace be to you and grace from him
Who freed us from our sins,
Who loved us all, and shed his blood
That we might saved be.

Sing holy, holy to our Lord,
The Lord, Almighty God,
Who was and is and is to come;
Sing holy, holy, Lord!

Rejoice in heaven, all ye that dwell therein,
Rejoice on earth, ye saints below,
For Christ is coming, is coming soon!
For Christ is coming soon.

E'en so, Lord Jesus, quickly come,
And night shall be no more.
They need no light, nor lamp, nor sun
For Christ will be their All!

Intercessions

Leader Lord, let your kingdom come

Response Let your will be done

Recessional Hymn 307: Lo! He comes with clouds descending

Blessing

Choir: The Vesper Responsory

Music: adapted from Palestrina (c.1525-1594) by Philip Ledger (1937-2012)

Judah and Jerusalem, fear not, nor be dismayed.

Tomorrow go ye forth and the Lord, he will be with you.

Stand ye still, and ye shall see the salvation of the Lord,

Tomorrow go ye forth and the Lord, he will be with you.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost

Tomorrow go ye forth and the Lord, he will be with you.

As you leave the church, there will be an opportunity to give to our work in cash, or using the white contactless terminal that takes £5, £10 or £20. Thank you for your support!

Christmas services at St Michael's

Sunday 17th December	3.30 pm	Christingle Service
	7.00 pm	Carol Service
Christmas Eve 24 th December	3.30 pm	Nativity service
	7.00 pm	Carol Service
	11.30 pm	Midnight Mass
Christmas Day 25 th December	8.00 am	Holy Communion (1662)
	9.30 am	All-Age Communion

